**Guidelines for Preparing Applications**

**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Initiative Grants**

**2009**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) staff designed these *Guidelines for Preparing Applications* to help applicants provide enough information for LSC to make decisions on funding requests. This document supplements the *Notice: Request for Applications to Apply for 2009 Grant Funding*. (**Notice**)

## APPLICATIONS BY INVITATION ONLY

For 2009, LSC solicited Letters of Intent to begin the Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) process. After reviewing those Letters of Intent, programs were invited to submit applications for proposed projects. Unless the program received an invitation to apply, do not apply for TIG funding in 2009.

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

Electronic submissions for the 2009 TIG grant cycle must be completed no later than **5:00 P.M. EDT, May 18, 2009.** LSC will not accept applications or portions of applications in hard-copy format. Begin the process by going to: http://www.tig.lsc.gov/ and click on TIG Online Systems. The online application system will be available by April 20, 2009.

LSC will not accept applications submitted after the application deadline. Therefore, allow sufficient time for online submission.

LSC will provide confirmation via email upon the completed electronic submission of each application. Keep this email as verification that the program's application was submitted. If no email is received, inquire at Techgrants@lsc.gov.

## ONE PROJECT PER APPLICATION

Each project for which funding is sought should be submitted in a separate application. For example, do not combine a request for a statewide website grant with a request for a grant in the Open Category. Multiple applications may be submitted, but each discrete project must be submitted separately.

## THREE CATEGORIES, TWO PROCEDURES

Applications for Website funding are not subject to external review but are reviewed internally by LSC to be sure they meet published criteria. Consequently, the information needed to review these applications is different from that needed for applications in the Open or Replication Category. Both applications will start with the *Standard Application Form*, but from there they will differ. Follow the procedures listed below for the type of grant sought.

## *PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL CATEGORIES*

## Total Number of Copies

LSC requires that each applicant submit **one (1) original signed application. This copy should be scanned and submitted electronically.** The copy with the original signature should be retained by the applicant.

## Signatures

**A signature is required** at the **bottom of** the *Standard Application Form*. **Failure to include a signature on the application may result in the rejection of the application.** The Application should be signed by someone who is authorized to commit the applicant organization, such as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, President, or Executive Director.

## Amendments to Applications after Application Deadline

LSC will **not** accept amendments to an application after the application deadline unless specifically requested by LSC staff. Applicants will be notified if any additional information is needed to evaluate the application. LSC may request information from applicants at any time.

## Changes in Applicant's Contact Information

If the contact information submitted on the *Standard Application Form* changes after submission, immediately notify LSC in writing or via email.

## Waiver Requests

As stated in the *Notice*, LSC does not intend to waive any provisions of the *Notice*. However, under extraordinary circumstances, and when it is in the best interest of the targeted client community to do so, LSC may, on its own initiative or when requested, waive certain provisions in the *Notice*. LSC cannot waive requirements that are statutory, only those that are discretionary. **A**s described in the *Notice*, requests to waive the application deadline will not be considered unless received by LSC prior to the application deadline.

- Programs planning to request a waiver prior to the application deadline must do so via email addressed to Techgrants@lsc.gov clearly stating (1) which provision(s) are asked to be waived, and (2) the extraordinary circumstances that necessitate the request. The request must be clearly identified as a "**Waiver Request**." LSC cannot guarantee that it will be able to resolve waiver requests before the application deadline.
- Waiver requests made at the same time applications are submitted must consist of a document inserted into the application packet and stating clearly (1) which provision(s) are asked to be waived, and (2) the extraordinary circumstances that necessitate the request. In order to ensure the timely processing of the waiver request, the request must be clearly

identified as a "Waiver Request" and inserted immediately after the *Standard Application Form*.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING APPLICATIONS IN THE WEBSITE CATEGORY

For 2009, there are two categories of Website grants. They are:

- **Renewal Websites**
- **Continuation Websites**

A TIG application in the Website Category is complete only when it contains the items referenced below. A complete application includes the following items and, for ease of processing, should be assembled in the following order:

- **Standard Application Form,** (scanned copy must be signed and placed on top)
- **Website Questionnaire** (answers to a series of questions that vary by the type of Website funding sought)

On the *Standard Application Form*, indicate the type of website funding sought, either Renewal or Continuation. This must be the same as was requested in the Letter of Intent. Verify that all of the contact information that was filled in automatically is correct. Complete the remaining blanks on the form, and then fill out the Website Questionnaire that corresponds to the type of website grant sought.

**Note that the objectives for website grants are fixed and do not need to be entered.** In addition to the completion of these online application sections, LSC requires that one complete copy of the application be uploaded. At the bottom of each section of the application is a Print Button. Print each page, have the *Standard Application Form* signed as required (see **Signatures** above), assemble all of the pages in the order listed above, scan these printouts into a single document, and upload this final application document. Applicants with the ability to print directly to PDF and then assemble those separate files into a single PDF file may do so, as long as the *Standard Application Form* has been printed, signed, scanned and is included in the final application form that is uploaded.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING APPLICATIONS IN OPEN AND REPLICATION CATEGORIES

A TIG application in the Open or Replication Category is complete only when it contains the items referenced below (excluding the optional item) and should be assembled in the following order:

- **Standard Application Form, Technology Initiative Grants Application Form** (scanned copy must be signed and placed on top)
- **Executive Summary** (1 page, up to 500 words)
- **Standard Budget Form**

- ■ **Budget Narrative**
- ■ **Project Narrative** (Up to 8 pages)
- ■ **Appendices to the Project Narrative** (Optional, up to 32 pages) **includes timelines, technical diagrams, organizational charts, maps, letters of support, résumés, etc.[1]**
- ■ **Information on Grantee's Prior TIG Projects**
- ■ **Lessons Learned from other Technology Projects**
- ■ **Proposed Payment Schedule**
- ■ **Statement of Additional Funds**

In addition to the completion of these online application sections, one complete copy of the application must be uploaded. At the bottom of each section of the application is a Print Button. Print each page, have the *Standard Application Form* signed as required (see **Signatures** above), assemble all of the pages in the order listed above, scan these printouts into a single document, and upload this final application document. Applicants with the ability to print directly to PDF and then assemble those separate files into a single PDF file may do so, as long as the *Standard Application Form* has been printed, signed, scanned and is included in the final application form that is uploaded.

## Standard Application Form

Each application should begin with a completed *Standard Application Form*. The category under which the grant is being submitted will be filled in automatically according to the Letter of Intent submitted. Next, indicate the total amount of funds requested from LSC and the total cost of the proposed project. Also, give a brief description of the nature of the project. This should be no more than six lines.

Finally, fill out the information identifying the applicant and the person LSC should contact about the application; then sign and date the application.

## Executive Summary

The second page of every application should be a concise, one (1) page *Executive Summary*, **not to exceed 500 words**. The *Executive Summary* is the first opportunity to introduce the reviewer to the project; it should be factual, brief, and focused on the purpose of the project.

The *Executive Summary* should briefly cover the core aspects of the project and address the following questions:

- What are the specific goal(s) and objectives of the project? These should be stated in concrete and measurable terms. For example, to what extent and in what ways will the project enhance or improve services to clients?

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[1] Do not use pointers to online resources. Reviewers will be instructed to ignore pointers to online resources. To include documentation available on the Internet, print the material and include it in the appendix.

- What is innovative about the project?
- How many sites are there and where are they located?
- What technologies are to be employed?
- What will users do with the technologies?
- Who are the communities to be served?
- What organizations are participating as project partners?
- What is the program's plan to sustain the project after the end of the grant?

## Standard Budget Form

As a component of the Feasibility review criterion, reviewers will analyze the budget request in terms of its clarity, cost-effectiveness, and consistency with the goals and objectives described in the *Project Narrative*. The proposed budget should be appropriate to the tasks proposed and sufficiently detailed so that reviewers can easily understand the relationship of items in the budget to the project activities. The *Budget Form* is available online at http://www.tig.lsc.gov/. This form is to be submitted electronically. There are fifteen budget items that must be filled in. Each area is the total for that category. For example, item 5 is for equipment purchases. If the project plans to purchase a server, a router and a battery backup, the costs of all three items would be added together for this category. Use the sum of these costs in this form only. In the *Budget Narrative*, set out descriptions and specific costs for each of these items. The *Budget Form* is the summary; the *Budget Narrative* is itemized.

Indicate who is paying for each of the 15 budget items. The *Budget Form* has five columns for (a) the amount requested from LSC, (b) the applicant's contributions, (c) additional funds from other LSC-funded partners, (d) additional funds from non-LSC-funded partners, and (e) the total of (a), (b) (c) and (d). All calculations will be automatically tabulated.

The entries made on the **Budget Form** are used to generate the **Budget Narrative**. The **Budget Form** must be saved and locked before starting the **Budget Narrative**.

## Budget Narrative

Use the *Budget Narrative* to expand on the budget items listed in the *Budget Form*. This is the place for detail and for cataloging proposed expenditures in relation to the project timetable. If the term of the project is three years, give the proposed expenditures for each of those years. Most projects will have identifiable stages. LSC anticipates structuring the grants so that they are payable in installments, conditioned upon completion of these stages. Identify the budget requirements for each of the different stages of the project in the *Budget Narrative*.

Fully explain each budget item so that it can be effectively evaluated. The budget must be reasonable for the tasks proposed, and the relationship of items in the budget to the *Project Narrative*, especially the project objectives, should be clearly defined and communicated.

When the grant award is awarded, the applicant is committed to the budget submitted in the application, including contributions from the applicant, from other LSC-funded partners, and from non-LSC funded partners. Be sure that the anticipated additional resources are realistic.

LSC will support most costs associated with a technology project. LSC allows costs for personnel, fringe benefits, computer hardware and software; other end-user equipment, telecommunication services and related equipment; consultants and other contractual services; travel; rental of office equipment; furniture and office space and supplies that are allowable under the applicable cost principles. Unspecified administrative costs will not be allowed. The only cost category specifically excluded is construction costs (see the Eligible Costs section of the *Notice*).

*Discounts:* The value of products or services must reflect the fully discounted price to the applicant. For instance, if there is a 70% discount on computer equipment, then the value of the equipment should appear in the budget as the **actual amount paid** (i.e., 30% of the undiscounted price of the computer equipment).

*Program Income:* As indicated in the *Notice*, any program income generated by a proposed project is subject to special conditions and needs to be identified appropriately in the budget.

## Project Narrative

The *Project Narrative* is the applicant's opportunity to demonstrate to reviewers that the project fits LSC objectives. Provide specific information about the project's goals and objectives, the major activities that will be conducted to achieve the goals and objectives, the project's partners, and the people affected by the project's outcomes (e.g., clients, program staff, partners). (Guidance for specifying TIG project goals, objectives and activities is available on the evaluation plan section of the TIG website: http://www.tig.lsc.gov/eval_nonwebsite_grants.php.)

Reviewers will assess the presentation from the perspective of how well the narrative addresses the *Review Criteria* defined in the *Notice*. These are: **Need for the Project (15%), Project Goals and Objectives (25%), State Justice Community Partnerships (15%), Replication (15%), Program Capacity and Project Staffing (10%), Past Performance (10%) and Sustainability of the Project (10%).** Carefully review the descriptions of each of these criterions in the *Notice* before preparing the *Project Narrative*.

The *Project Narrative* should start with a section that clearly and succinctly identifies (a) why the project is needed, (b) the specific technology(ies) the project will develop, (c) the project's goals and objectives, (d) the major steps in the project implementation, and (e) the timetable for completing these major steps. The project goals and objectives should be expressed in specific, concrete and measurable terms. This section of the project narrative should demonstrate clearly what is proposed, why it is proposed, and what it will accomplish. Next, address each part of the *Review Criteria* in seven clearly marked sections, one for each criterion.

The **Project Narrative** is an uploaded document. It may only be a Word 2003 compatible (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) document. Once it is uploaded the form is locked and the **Project Narrative** cannot be changed.

## Appendices to the Project Narrative

In addition to the *Project Narrative*, up to 32 pages may be submitted to fully document the proposal. These may include documents such as timelines, technical diagrams, organizational charts, maps, letters of support, and résumés. For example, most technology projects will use outside firms and consultants for implementation. Because information on the past projects and credentials of these firms and consultants will be essential in determining the likelihood of success, be sure to provide sufficient information.

**The Project Narrative and Appendices combined must not exceed forty (40) pages.** The 40-page limit includes a *Project Narrative* of up to eight (8) pages and thirty-two (32) pages of appendices.

**It is important to stay within the allowed page limits.** Reviewers will be instructed to ignore any portion of the application that exceeds the specified page limits. Because the *Project Narrative* is limited to 8 pages, include information in the appendices that supports the application. Uploads are limited to file extension types of .doc, .pdf, and .rtf only.

## Information on Grantee's Prior TIG Projects

If the applicant has been awarded TIG funds in previous rounds, this portion of the form will be populated with those prior grants listed by TIG number. Provide a short narrative that gives the current status of each of these prior projects.

## Lessons Learned from Other Technology Projects

This is the tenth round of grant awards in the TIG program. To date, 375 grants have been awarded. New projects should build upon the knowledge gained from these past projects. In this section of the application, elaborate on how the proposed project relates to prior projects; how it builds upon them, what was learned from them, and how the project will avoid any pitfalls they have faced.

For example, if a video conferencing project is proposed, be sure to review the results of the prior video conferencing projects by looking at the materials on LSTech.org and the LSC Resource Library (www.lri.lsc.gov), and by speaking with technical and other staff from these programs. In this section demonstrate that this review has occurred and that the project will build upon and improve on the past projects.

## Proposed Payment Schedule

Plan the project for two fixed payments (initial and final) and an interim payment for each six months of the grant term. If the grant is awarded, the initial payment will be made shortly after the grant acceptance letter is returned to LSC. LSC recognizes that many of the costs for a project are incurred early on, so the initial payment may be the largest, but it will be no more than 50% of the grant total. The final payment must be for at least 10% of the grant request, or

$5,000, whichever is greater. Apportion the balance of the monies requested among the interim payments.

If the grant is awarded, the project goals, objectives, and steps will be agreed upon by LSC and the grantee, then included as part of the grant award package. Interim payments will be made for progress toward achieving project goals and objectives based upon the completion of steps required to achieve them. The final payment will be made after the **Final Report** is submitted and approved.

The dates for the requested payments will depend upon the length of the proposed project. If the project is expected to be completed in one year, payment two most likely would come approximately six months after the start of the project, payment three at the end of the year, then payment four would be scheduled three months later to allow time for the preparation and approval of the final report.

**Example -** for a one year grant request of $100,000, the four payments might be: payment one (initial payment) in January, 2010 for $40,000; payment two in July 2010 for $25,000; payment three in December, 2010 for $25,000; and payment four (final payment) in March 2011 for $10,000 (10% of the grant total). An eighteen-month grant would have five payments, a two-year grant six payments, etc.

## Statement of Additional Funds

As noted above, the ***Budget Form*** should include a listing of LSC funding, program project contributions, funds from other LSC funded partners, and funds from non-LSC-funded partners. In this section, specify these other partners by name and identify how much each will be contributing.

## *GENERAL SUGGESTIONS*

- *Be succinct and clear*. Because of page limitations, discuss the project clearly and succinctly. Reviewers should learn what is proposed and how well it responds to the ***Review Criteria*** published in the ***Notice***.
- *Review the Project Narrative once it is complete*. It should be a coherent and convincing presentation.
- *Use appendices to make the proposed project understandable*. Keep in mind that the application will be read by a diverse group of reviewers — independent reviewers, LSC staff, and the LSC President. Use the thirty-two (32) pages allocated for appendices to expand upon the important points in greater detail.
- *Check the application for completeness*. Reviewers can only evaluate proposals using the documentation that is provided. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the uploaded copy includes the required materials.

## *FOR MORE INFORMATION*

For information regarding preparation and submission of the application or questions about the process, please contact Magali Khalkho, Program Analyst, Telephone: 202.295.1543, Email: khalkhom@lsc.gov.

For questions about proposals please contact Glenn Rawdon, Program Counsel, Telephone: 202.295.1552; Email: grawdon@lsc.gov,

For general questions, please email techgrants@lsc.gov.